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S P E E C H

OF

HON. GEORGE GRAY,
OF DELAWARE,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

APRIL 14, 1898,

IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY.

W A S H I N G T O N .

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S P E E C H
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H O N . G E O R G E G R A Y .

The Senate having under consideration the joint resolution (S. R. 149) for the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect—

Mr. GRAY said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: If it were not for the fact that I am a member of the committee which has reported the resolutions that are now before the Senate, I would at this solemn and fateful moment in the history of my country remain silent and content myself by my vote in vindicating the position which I think my country should occupy in asserting her cause before the civilized world. In the few moments that I shall occupy I shall not concern myself with any such—and I say it with all respect—inconceivably, in the presence of such a crisis, low and contemptible considerations as to who may or who may not hold the bonds of Spain or of the Cuban Republic.

I am not here, sir, to govern my public action in the face of the world in this grave crisis by mere suspicion as to what may or may not be the motives of others. I was not born with suspicion in my blood; but I was born, I hope, sir, with that in my blood that will make me always stand erect, until I am stricken down, for the honor of my country and the glory of her flag.

Mr. President, it is a hackneyed saying, I know, that partisan politics halt at the shore line; but, hackneyed as it is, it is pregnant with meaning. We are here to-day—and I attribute to no Senator upon this floor any feeling less patriotic than my own—we are here to-day as Americans all. Patriotism, and not partisanship, is the spring and motive, as it should be, of our action, whatever form it may take. I do not believe that anyone here

will gain his own consent to maneuver for a partisan advantage at a time like this. I am here, sir, to support, not a Republican President, not to say that I range myself behind a partisan leader, but, in my humble way, to support an American President, the leader of 70,000,000 of people, inducted into his high office by their will and by the laws of his country.

Mr. DANIEL. Will my friend allow me to ask him if he considers these resolutions in line with the President's message?

Mr. GRAY. I will come to that and answer if my friend will indulge me for a moment.

Mr. President, I am here, in case we can not do what I think better, to support the resolutions which came from the committee of which I have the honor to be a member. I believe, however, sir, that the resolution that was introduced yesterday by the Senator from Maine [Mr. FRYE] is wiser and a better expression of the feeling of the country. It was considered by the Committee on Foreign Relations and received the support in that committee, as was said yesterday—and I am not disclosing, certainly, at first hand the secrets of that committee or its proceedings—received the support of four—I do not remember, but five, certainly of four—members of that committee, and I believe, as I said, it better represents the feeling of this country and the attitude that the good people of the United States would assume if they had a fair expression of their own will, and of their own desire in that regard.

Mr. DANIEL. Mr. President, my honorable friend is using language which is vital to this case and rather seems to imply that those who differ with him are not in so loyal and high an attitude toward the President as he is.

Mr. GRAY. I disclaim it if I have said anything which would give the Senator ground for such a statement.

Mr. DANIEL. The Senator puts an interpretation upon these resolutions—

Mr. GRAY. I have not discussed the resolutions. I have not come to them yet. I am going to speak of them.

Mr. DANIEL. I thought you said you would speak to these resolutions in support of the President of the United States.

Mr. GRAY. No, sir; I did not use that language.

Mr. DANIEL. What I wish to know is whether the Senator, when he recommends these resolutions to us, considers that they embody the views of the President of the United States?

Mr. GRAY. Mr. President, with all respect for my very good friend the Senator from Virginia I do think that he is a little previous in asking the question.

Mr. DANIEL. I beg pardon of the Senator.

Mr. GRAY. I know there is no intention on his part to unduly interrupt me, but I had not spoken to the resolutions, although I intended to discuss them in my own way as well as I could and very briefly. I will come to them in a moment.

Mr. President, I did say with some emphasis, because it came from my heart, that I was here, as I conceive my duty as an American Senator to be, to support in this grave crisis of our country's history an American President, chosen by the American people for the very purpose that he is now seeking to carry out and achieve.

Mr. President, there is no need that I should occupy the time of this Senate in making, or in attempting to make, a speech, if I were capable of it, that would merely have a tendency to excite the feelings of the American people or my colleagues here if they needed such excitement. We do not need to lash running horses. We all agree—of course I know we all agree—in the patriotic intent and purpose to support our country and stand loyally by it in this hour of trial, but I want to put, in these few brief hours before final action is taken, for myself and for others who may think that what I say is worthy of attention, the case of my country upon grounds so high, as I conceive them, that all the world must approve them.

Mr. President, why have we waited all these long years while suffering humanity has been crying out across the narrow strait that divides Cuba from the territory of the United States? Why, during all these months of patient waiting and anxious longing, have we been performing our international duty that we owe to a power with whom we are at peace? Why have we patrolled our coast and spent millions of the public money in order that international duty might be kept and performed to the letter? It is because the American people, as represented by the American

Government, have a conscience. It is because no war or armed collision, with all its frightful sequences, would be tolerated by the civilization of America unless its conscience was satisfied that such collision and such war was righteous altogether. We have no dynastic wars; we have no wars of conquest or aggression: we have marked out in our diplomacy for a hundred years a new pathway, which has led the nations upward to a higher plane, and that is our glory and our pride. It is because the conscience of America is satisfied to-day that we stand here and feel that we are reflecting their will when we vote for any of the resolutions which are now before the Senate.

What has made the case that has thus affected so deeply the heart and conscience of the American people? Exceptional circumstances, circumstances that we had no hand in creating, and out of those circumstances duties have arisen that we can not evade or ignore. Time and propinquity are of the essence of the situation. [Cuba is right at our door, and that colors and qualifies the duty we owe and the attitude we occupy toward her.] If she were on the other side of the ocean, moored off the coast of Africa or Portugal, while our interest might be excited and our feelings stirred, our duty might be different. But there she is where God placed her. There, during all these three years, we have waited while the drama of blood has been enacted under our eyes, and we have stood as a people strong and conscientious, with a religious and holy hope that humanity at last would assert itself there without our intervention and right those wrongs; and we have waited and waited until, in the language of the President, we can endure it no longer and the situation has become intolerable.

Time then enters into it. Time has elapsed sufficient to make our duty clear and plain. [God knows that I, with others in this body and outside of it, would have had this occasion pass away, would have avoided all necessity for unrolling the purple testament of bloody war and sought some peaceful solution, as I believe that the President of the United States has, conscientiously and in accordance with the best feelings and aspirations and desires of the American people, sought a peaceful solution of this difficulty. Mr. President, I applaud every effort that he has

made to secure peace with honor to this peace-loving country. We are to-day stronger morally and materially for those efforts. And he would not have fairly met the high responsibility of his station had he failed to make them. The American people will not fail to do justice to their President.

But, as the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. HOAR] said, it is apparent from the President's message that the function of diplomacy is exhausted and the matter is submitted to the Congress of the United States.

Now, what are the grounds upon which we are to take the grave step which we are about to take? To recognize merely the struggling Republic of Cuba in its contest against the parent country? No. Suppose that contest had been waged in such fashion that the rules of civilized war had not been violated; we would not have been justified merely on that account in recognizing this republic as independent from the mother country—we would not have been performing our international duty if we had—but it is because in the course of that contest humanity has been outraged, the conscience of the American people has been stirred, and a state of things has been produced which no man with a human heart in his breast can look upon calmly and with quiet pulse.

Mr. President, the case has been made up. The President has recited the pitiful story in the message which he has sent us. It has been reenforced by the sober, calm, almost colorless statement of our own colleague, the Senator from Vermont [Mr. PROCTOR]. The consular reports make that statement a moderate one and under, rather than beyond, the truth. We have those reports on our desks. I do not want to read from them; we have it all with us; the world will have it all. I do not want to take up your time to tell you that in January of this year Consul-General Fitzhugh Lee, writing to the Government, says:

I have the honor to transmit herewith some statistics sent me about the mortality in the town of Santa Clara, the capital of Santa Clara Province, situated about 33 miles south of Sagua, which numbers some 14,000 inhabitants. It will be noticed that there were 5,489 deaths in that town in the seven years previous to 1897, which included 1,417 in one year, from an epidemic of yellow fever, while in 1897, owing to the concentration order, there were 6,981; the concentration order went into effect in February.

In that year, 1897, the month's death rate for January was 78, but in Feb-

ruary, the first month of reconcentration, there were 114, and there has been a gradual increase since, as you will see, until in December, 1897, the number of deaths was 1,011.

Or that Mr. Brice, in a letter dated November 17 last, said:

Death rate in this city over 80 persons daily, and nearly all from want of food, medicines, and clothing. As I write this a dead negro woman lies in the street, within 200 yards of this consulate, starved to death; died some time this morning, and will lie there, maybe, for days. The misery and desititution in this city and other towns in the interior are beyond description.

Mr. BACON. What is the date of that letter?

Mr. GRAY. November 17, 1897. I take these reports at hazard. There are many other things more harrowing still, but I am not here to harrow your feelings, but to state the basis of our action. That is well stated in the preamble to the resolution reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, which reads as follows:

Whereas the abhorrent conditions which have existed for more than three years in the Island of Cuba, so near our own borders, have shocked the moral sense of the people of the United States, have been a disgrace to Christian civilization, culminating, as they have, in the destruction of a United States battle ship, with 266 of its officers and crew, while on a friendly visit in the harbor of Havana, and can not longer be endured, as has been set forth by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of April 11, 1898, upon which the action of Congress was invited: Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives, etc.

I want to call the attention of the Senate to the ground upon which this committee has placed the action which they invite in this body, not that the Republic of Cuba has sustained a gallant contest for these three years past—and I know that in every fiber of my being I sympathize with those gallant men—not on that account, but on account of the violated womanhood and childhood and motherhood and manhood that has been perpetrated right at our own doors. That is the morality of the situation.

I liken the action which is proposed to be taken in this country now, Mr. President, so far as its moral aspect is concerned as a member of the family of nations, to that of a man in a civilized community who is a law-abiding citizen, who has next door to him a villainous and cruel neighbor who every day chokes his wife and starves and maltreats his children, and because he is a law-abiding citizen he bears it and bears it and bears it for days and weeks, until at last he can bear it no longer, and, law or no

law, he enters the residence of his neighbor, takes him by the throat, and says, "Take your hand off of that woman and let these children go;" and all his neighbors applaud. That is what we propose to do, and all our neighbors of the family of nations will applaud our action in so doing. If they do not, God help them and the civilization they represent.

Mr. President, interference in the government of another country is nowhere countenanced by specific rule or canon of international law. It can not be. You could not formulate a rule of international law to say that under certain circumstances one nation may invade the territory of another if the purpose is so and so and so and so; but international law stands mute and holds that nation blameless that in the cause of humanity interferes to bring about a cessation of outrageous cruelty, to lift up the falling cause of humanity, and to let the oppressed go free. Every case must stand upon its own merits, and when the case of a civilized Christian country commends itself to the moral judgment of its citizens, then it is sanctioned, then it is justified, in the interference it proposes.

The writers on international law have not been entirely silent upon this subject. Professor Lawrence, of England, in a recent publication in 1895, called *Principles of International Law*, after stating the general rule that international law does not countenance or sanction the interference or invasion of one nation in the affairs or in the territory of another, states this principle thus:

At the same time, it—

That is, international law—

At the same time, it will not condemn such interventions if they are undertaken with a single eye to the object in view and without ulterior considerations of self-interest and ambition.

Have we not, Senators, in our conduct purged our action and our intent of every possible selfish consideration? Where, Mr. President, have you ever heard, either on the floor of the Senate or the House of Representatives, in public utterance or private deliverance, one suggestion that we should interfere for the sake of aggrandizing the territory of the United States or bringing about the annexation of Cuba as a star to be added to the galaxy

of the States of this Union? Never, I will warrant. I never have.

Should the cruelty—

Now, mark you—

Should the cruelty be so long continued and so revolting that the best instincts of human nature are outraged by it, and should an opportunity arise for bringing it to an end and removing its cause without adding fuel to the flame of the contest, there is nothing in the law of nations which will condemn as a wrongdoer the state which steps forward and undertakes the necessary intervention. Each case must be judged on its own merits. There is a great difference between declaring a national act to be legal, and therefore part of the order under which states have consented to live, and allowing it to be morally blameless as an exception to ordinary rules. I have no right to enter my neighbor's garden without his consent; but if I saw a child of his robbed and ill-treated in it by a tramp, I should throw ceremony to the winds and rush to the rescue without waiting to ask for permission. In the same way, a state may, in a great emergency, set aside everyday restraints, and neither in its case nor in the corresponding case of the individual will blame be incurred.

Mr. President, upon that high ground I wish to place the cause of my country, now about to take this important step which may set the world aflame. I desire that statement to go before the forum of nations to justify the course we are about to pursue. Nothing here less high, less holy, less sacred, could impel the great American people thus to stand erect and demand that this cruelty, outrage, and oppression shall cease, and cease at once upon our demand, and if not upon our demand, then by force of American arms.

We have nothing here to do with the Monroe doctrine. It plays no part in this contest. The circumstances by which we are surrounded are exceptional. The case is out of any ordinary rule—the propinquity of Cuba, the tyranny they have endured, the outrages, and the character of them, as my friend the Senator from Alabama [Mr. MORGAN] says. No, Mr. President, it is because outraged nature can not longer stand what we have been compelled to endure. We can not forever keep our place and say we are not our brother's keeper. God himself will hold us to responsibility if we continue to plead thus.

Mr. President, there are some lines of a New England poet on another occasion, to express the deep feeling of a strong and righteous American welling up from an honest heart, that seem to me

to apply to the situation that is forced upon our observation, where he exclaims:

Look on who will in apathy,
And stifle ye who can
The sympathies, the hopes, the fears,
That make man truly man.

I first drew in New England's air,
And from her hardy breast
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk
That will not let me rest.

Mr. President, a word or two more as to the report of the minority of the committee in regard to the recognition of Cuba. I have already touched upon it. The Senator from Indiana [Mr. TURPIE] who has just taken his seat, in the eloquent address which he has made—and no one listens to him more gladly and delightedly than I always do—used an illustration which it seems to me ought to control the situation. He said suppose France at the end of our Revolutionary struggle, with her armed forces on our shores, had attempted to dictate to the United States as to what form of government they should have and how they should administer that which they already had. The answer, of course, could be only in one vein.

Is that to be the attitude of the United States on the Island of Cuba when this war shall happily come to end, that we are to stand mute in the presence of this republican government, and no matter what policy is pursued, no matter what form of government they set up, that we are to retire without influence, without voice, as to the future of the people of that island? Suppose, for instance—and I am making a violent assumption, because from what I know of the people who make that republic and are its leaders I have only admiration for them—that at the end of that struggle Gomez and his followers should seek to wreak vengeance as the result of the not unnatural resentment which he and his followers have against the 200,000 Spanish subjects who still remain upon that island. Are we to have no voice? Is our protest to be of no avail, and is the analogy put by the Senator from Indiana in the case of France and the United States at the end of the Revolutionary struggle to hold? No; it can not.

No, Mr. President, we are intervening not to recognize a revolutionary government, but we are interfering in the sacred cause

of humanity; and if it comes, as surely it will—the independence of the people of that island—due respect and due influence and due weight and consideration will surely be given to the gallant men who have made this struggle and have erected the framework of government of which we hear so much; but we will hold their future in our hands, and I am not afraid of any bondholding attack upon the United States on the ground that we have for a single moment controlled the destinies of that island. We do not, in the language of the books, absorb her territory. We do not as we enter into this great drama declare that we wish to absorb the territory. We declare something entirely different. And if you are to take our conduct measured and characterized by our declarations, then we are absolved and free from the conditions upon which any power on earth could claim that we were responsible for the incomes which have been mortgaged to pay Spanish bonds.

Mr. LINDSAY. If it will not interrupt the Senator from Delaware, I should like to make an inquiry. Suppose when we take possession of the Island of Cuba and make the people of Cuba independent they form a government which, in our estimation, operates unjustly toward a portion of the people of that island who adhered to the Spanish Crown, are we to refuse to recognize the government; and if so, to what means are we to resort to cause a government to be erected that comes within our approval?

Mr. GRAY. We can not guard against every human eventuality, but we can take care that a government formed under our supervision and care and tutelage shall be such a government as will be just not only to this country but to those for whom we have concern on the score of humanity in the territory over which that government extends. I do not believe that there is any thought now or that there ever has been any thought that we are forever, after this matter shall be accomplished, to exercise a protectorate or suzerainty over that island or any government which may be set up there under our auspices.

Mr. LINDSAY. Then, if the Senator will permit, I will ask another question. If we are to retain control until a government is formed which meets with our approval, will that government be the act of the people or the act of the United States?

Mr. GRAY. We are crossing a great many bridges before we

get to them, but I believe that when that happy consummation of American arms shall come we shall say to all the world, and illustrate what we say by our acts, that no selfish consideration has actuated us; that we spoke the truth when we said we intervene in the cause of humanity, and that we have aided the people of that island in setting up a republican government, and we will retire and leave them to conduct better housekeeping than was ever conducted under Spanish rule or Spanish protectorate. Now, I leave the subject.

Mr. CAFFERY. Will the Senator permit me to ask him whether or not, after we intervene, the making of such a government as we approve of by the United States does not of itself constitute a protectorate?

Mr. GRAY. Oh, Mr. President, I am not here to answer metaphysical conundrums like that. I am here, sir, in the face of this—

Mr. CAFFERY. Will the Senator pardon me? Does the Senator decline to answer my question?

Mr. GRAY. I decline to answer it now, because it has nothing to do with my argument.

Mr. CAFFERY. I beg pardon of the Senator for interrupting him.

Mr. GRAY. I always listen to my friend with pleasure, but I am about to close.

Mr. CAFFERY. I am so opaque-minded that I do not see any metaphysics in the question.

Mr. GRAY. That may be.

Mr. BACON. Will the Senator from Delaware permit me to ask him a question, as a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations? I ask it because I desire the information. Do I understand the Senator to favor the first resolution reported by the committee?

Mr. GRAY. I favor those resolutions if I can not get what I consider better. I do not think they are the best possible outcome.

Mr. BACON. The Senator does not favor it?

Mr. GRAY. I favor the resolutions in one contingency—when the others are voted down. I am going to vote, if I have the opportunity, for another set.

Mr. BACON. That is a preliminary question which I wanted to ask the Senator. Probably he may not be in a position to reply to what I am about to ask, as he does not give his unqualified consent to the first resolution. I ask it in good faith, in order that I may get the opinion of the Senator, and through him the opinions of his colleagues upon the committee. I ask the Senator to state to the Senate what he means by the term in the resolution, the independence of the people of Cuba?

Mr. GRAY. I will reply to the Senator. The first resolution reads thus:

First. That the people of the Island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be free and independent.

I agree that the people of the Island of Cuba of right ought to be free and independent. I wish to God that I could say that they are. I do not believe it.

Mr. BACON. The Senator, as I understand it, does not agree to that word "are?"

Mr. GRAY. I do not.

Mr. BACON. Then the inquiry which I wish to make must be addressed to some other Senator. I want to know, and I ask the other members of the committee to bear it in mind when they come to address the Senate, what is the meaning of that resolution when it says that the people are independent.

Mr. MORGAN. May I interrupt for a minute?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. MORGAN. I will ask the Senator from Georgia what is the meaning of the very identical language in the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776, when the world knows that historically we were not then independent?

Mr. BACON. I think the answer is a very plain one. We are speaking of another people. We are speaking of the conditions there existing. We say that we recognize that they are independent.

Mr. MORGAN. Historically—

Mr. BACON. One moment, if you please. I want to know what you mean when you say it. I am not saying it.

Mr. GRAY (to Mr. BACON). Ask him in your own time, if you please.

Mr. BACON. Let me finish the answer. I am not responsible for the interjection of the Senator from Alabama. It was he who asked the question. We, in the case of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, were speaking of ourselves, which is a vast difference.

Mr. GRAY. That is the true distinction. I agree with the Senator from Georgia entirely. In 1776 we declared before the world that we were free and independent.

Mr. MORGAN. Was that the truth?

Mr. GRAY. We are now called upon to state as a fact in regard to another people that which is notoriously not true.

Mr. MORGAN. Will the Senator allow me?

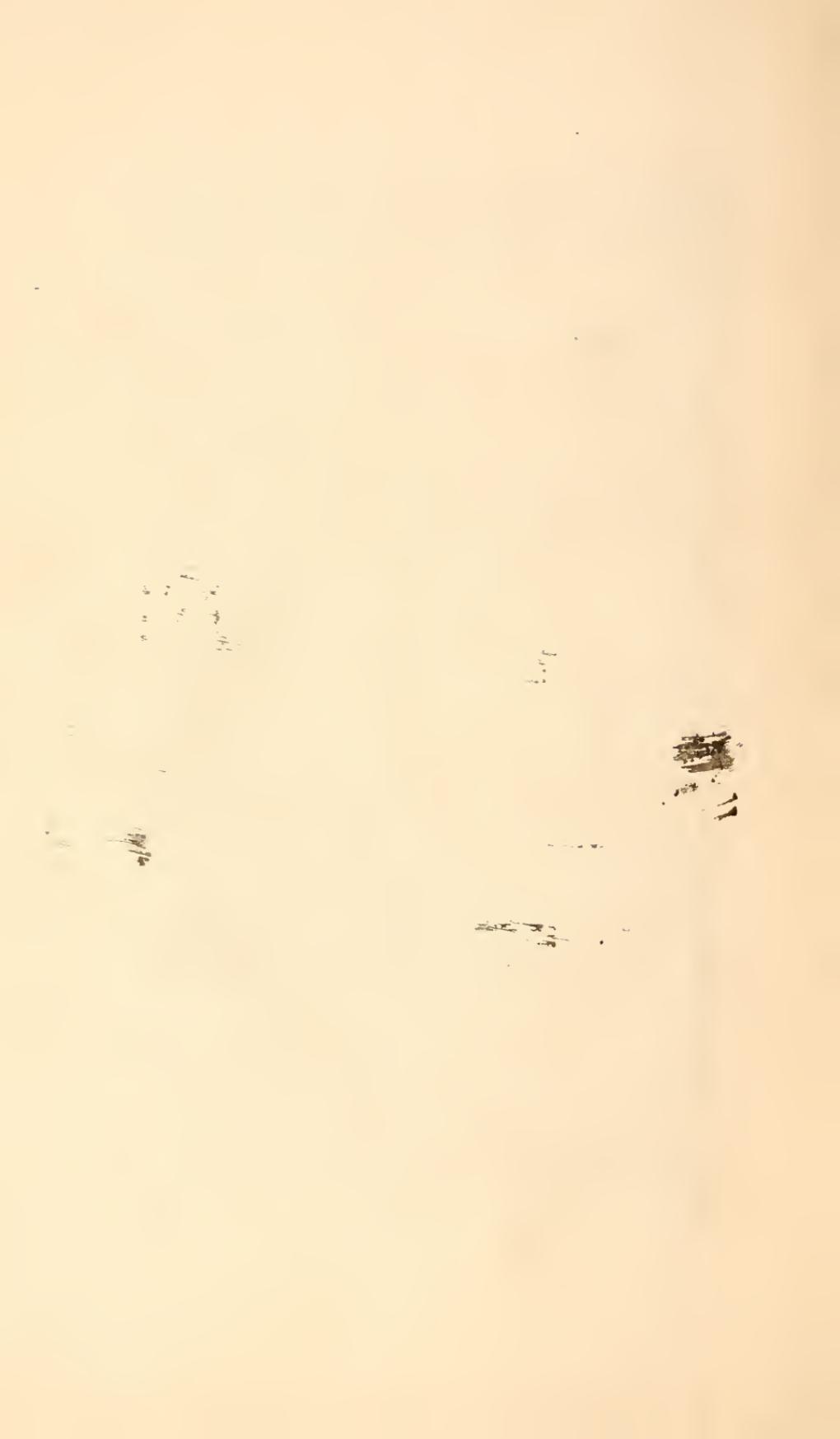
Mr. GRAY. I was about to close.

Mr. MORGAN. When we made the declaration in 1776 that the people of the United States are and of right ought to be free and independent, we certainly were not speaking of history. We were simply uttering a grand political decree which was the basis of our political union at that time, and that was the meaning of that decree at that time, and it is the meaning, as I understand it, of this resolution.

Mr. GRAY. The President of the United States in his late message, besides reciting the pitiful tale of sufferings and outrage in the Island of Cuba, has told us, and we are bound to take his official declaration as the basis of our action, and the rightful and competent basis of our action, that—

The long trial has proved that the object for which Spain has waged the war can not be attained. The fire of insurrection may flame or may smolder with varying seasons, but it has not been and it is plain that it can not be extinguished by present methods. The only hope of relief and repose from a condition which can no longer be endured is the enforced pacification of Cuba. In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop.

And so say the American people, unless I mishear their voice entirely. This war must stop in the interests spoken of by the President, and for that we intervene, and for that cause we will rally the manhood of America, which will go to the seacoast with an erect and defiant front, ready to die for the honor of their country and in the cause of outraged humanity which we attempt to succor. [Applause in the galleries.]





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